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## Brady, Belichick Deny Knowledge Of Deflated Footballs

New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady speaks at a news conference in Foxborough, Mass., Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015 where he addressed the issue of the NFL investigation of deflated footballs.

(AP Photo/Elise Amendola)  
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## Saudi King Abdullah has died, Prince Salman named as successor

AYA BATRAWY

ABDULLAH AL-SHIHRI

Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)

— Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, the powerful U.S. ally who joined Washington's fight against al-Qaida and sought to modernize the ultraconservative Muslim kingdom with incremental but significant reforms, including nudging open greater opportunities for women, has died, according to Saudi state TV. He was 90.

Abdullah's death was announced on Saudi state TV by a presenter who said the king died at 1 a.m. on Friday. His successor was announced as 79-year-old half-brother, Prince Salman, a Royal Court statement carried on the Saudi Press Agency said.

Salman was Abdullah's crown prince and had recently taken on some of the ailing king's responsibilities. The 69 year-old Prince Muqrin, a former head of intelligence in Saudi Arabia and half-brother to both Salman and Abdullah, was announced as the kingdom's crown prince.

More than his guarded predecessors, Abdullah — who ascended to the throne in 2005 — assertively threw his oil-rich nation's weight behind trying to shape the Middle East. His priority was to counter the influence of rival, mainly Shiite Iran wherever it tried to make advances. He and fellow Sunni Arab monarchs also

staunchly opposed the Middle East's wave of pro-democracy uprisings, seeing them as a threat to stability and their own rule. Regionally, perhaps Abdullah's biggest priority was to confront Iran, the Shiite powerhouse across the Gulf. He backed Sunni Muslim factions against Tehran's allies in several countries, where colliding ambitions stoked proxy conflicts around the region that enflamed Sunni-Shiite hatreds — most horrifically in Syria's civil war, where the two countries backed opposing sides. Those conflicts in turn hiked Sunni militancy that returned to threaten Saudi Arabia.

Abdullah was selected as crown prince in 1982 on the day his half-brother Fahd ascended to the throne. He became de facto ruler in 1995 when a stroke incapacitated Fahd. Abdullah was believed to have long rankled at the closeness of the alliance with the United States, and as regent he pressed Washington to withdraw the troops it had deployed in the kingdom since the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. He was constantly frustrated by Washington's failure to broker a settlement to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. In 2000, Abdullah convinced the Arab League to approve an unprecedented offer that all Arab states would agree to peace with Israel if it withdrew from lands it captured in 1967.

Continued on page 8



In this 2009 file photo, King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, waves to members of the Saudi Shura "consultative" council in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. On early Friday, Jan. 23, 2015, Saudi state TV reported King Abdullah died at the age of 90.

(AP Photo/Hassan Ammar)

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## Republicans push abortion bill through US House

**JEREMY W. PETERS**

© 2015 New York Times

**WASHINGTON** - House Republicans on Thursday formally abandoned plans to vote on a contentious bill that would make most abortions illegal after 20 weeks of pregnancy as they struggled to mend another unwelcome rift that threatens to tarnish their party's image with women

and younger voters. Instead, the House approved a separate and more limited measure to forbid the use of taxpayer funding to pay for abortions.

Republican leaders decided Wednesday night to cancel a vote on the 20-week ban bill to quell a revolt from women within the party who objected that the legislation did not do

enough to accommodate victims of rape.

The alternative measure passed by a vote of 239-179, largely along party lines. It was unclear whether Congress would take up the 20-week ban again, despite pledges from leaders in both chambers to do so now that Republicans control the House and the Senate. The rebellion cre-



**Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky., joined by Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., left, arrives to speak with reporters after a weekly Republican policy meeting on Capitol Hill in Washington. House Republicans on Thursday approved a measure to forbid the use of taxpayer funding to pay for abortions.**

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)



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ated awkward tension between Republican lawmakers on Capitol Hill and the thousands of abortion opponents who gathered on the nearby National Mall on Thursday to observe the 42nd anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision.

Instead of celebrating what many conservatives had hoped would be a moment to put Democrats on the defensive over the difficult question of terminating pregnancies in the fifth month, they found themselves divided.

Anti-abortion groups opposed any changes to the legislation banning abortions at 20 weeks as it was written, which would have provided exceptions only for women who were raped or minors who were incest victims if they reported their assault to the authorities. A group of Republican women in the House objected, saying they did not believe the exceptions were fair to the large numbers of women who never report their sexual assaults. One of the most striking aspects of the split was that some of the Republican

women leading it were members of the party's leadership team, some of them young, emerging faces that House Speaker John A. Boehner and his deputies have been putting front and center.

Rep. Kristi Noem, R-S.D., a deputy whip, said Thursday that members were continuing to work on a way to revive the 20-week measure to address the concerns of those who were uneasy with it.

"One of the things that people forget," Noem said, "is the legislative process is messy. And it should be OK, it should be acceptable to have this kind of debate." The House passed an identical 20-week ban in 2013, and many of the women who broke with their party Thursday had voted for it. And while the Senate majority leader, Sen. Mitch McConnell, has vowed that the Republican-led chamber would hold a vote on the ban this year, the rape and incest provision would have complicated efforts to win votes from more moderate Republicans. □





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## Obama proposes larger federal subsidies for child care

JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS

© 2015 New York Times

**LAWRENCE, Kan.** - President Barack Obama on Thursday unveiled plans to greatly increase federal assistance to working Americans struggling to afford child care, choosing a Democratic pocket in a solidly Republican state to sharpen the contrast

child, the maximum child care tax credit. And the president said he would push to put more federal money into early childhood programs, expanding the availability of free pre-school and extending Head Start - focused on low-income families - to last an entire day, and for the full school year.

His trips this week, to Idaho on Wednesday and here Thursday, are in places controlled by Republican governors and members of Congress.

"I'm a Kansas guy," the president said, noting that although his mother was a native, those roots did not help him to carry the state in either of his presidential

Loomis served as an aide to Kathleen Sebelius, Obama's former secretary of health and human services, when she was the state's Democratic governor. He said the economy in Kansas under the current Republican governor, Sam Brownback - who has cut taxes for high earners and business, slashed spending on education, and declined to expand Medicaid - offered a "stark dif-

ference" between the vision the president is laying out for helping the middle class.

Kansas is also home to Koch Industries and ground zero for the conservative political empire of the billionaire brothers Charles G. and David H. Koch, backers of Americans for Prosperity, which spent \$120 million in 2012 in attempts to defeat Obama and congressional Democrats.



President Barack Obama shakes hands with people outside the Community Children's Center in Lawrence, Kansas, Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015, before speaking about the themes in his State of the Union address.

(AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

between the two parties' economic visions. In an appearance at the University of Kansas - his second stop in a Republican state in two days of promoting his domestic initiatives - Obama called for an \$80 billion expansion of a federal program that provides child care subsidies to low- and middle-income families with children ages 3 and younger, nearly doubling the aid and offering it to more than 1 million additional children over the next decade. He promoted his plan to nearly triple, to \$3,000 per

"These aren't just nice-to-have's, this is a must-have," Obama told several thousand people in a hulking gymnasium on the campus. "It is time that we stop treating child care as a side issue or a, quote-unquote 'women's issue.' This is a family issue, this is a national economic priority for all of us." Obama is engaging in a well-worn tradition of presidents taking their State of the Union themes out of Washington and around the country after their prime-time speeches to Congress - but with a twist.

campaigns. "I might have won sections of Lawrence - that's possible," he said with a smile, acknowledging the Democratic bent of the college town of about 90,000. Lawrence is "this little blue dot in a red sea here," said Burdett A. Loomis, a political science professor at the University of Kansas. "Going to two of the very reddest states in the country in the wake of a State of the Union address that was very much a blue address, the president is laying down a lot of challenges to the Republican Congress."

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## Powerful NY state politician arrested on corruption charges

**TOM HAYS**

**Associated Press**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — One of New York state's most powerful politicians was arrested Thursday on public corruption charges and accused of using his position to obtain nearly \$4 million dollars in bribes and kickbacks masked as legitimate income.

The 70-year-old New York Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver was taken into custody at about 8 a.m. (1300 GMT) at the FBI's New York City office, FBI spokesman Peter Donald confirmed. Silver faces five counts, including conspiracy and bribery charges.

A magistrate judge in federal court in Manhattan later released the lawmaker on \$200,000 bail.



**New York State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver is surrounded by media as he leaves a federal courthouse in New York, Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015. Silver, 70, was arrested Thursday on public corruption charges and accused of using his position to obtain millions of dollars in bribes and kickbacks masked as legitimate income. A magistrate judge in federal court in Manhattan later released the lawmaker on \$200,000 bail.**

(AP Photo/Seth Wenig)

The arrest sent shock waves through New York's Capitol as a new legislative session has begun, and it came just a day after Silver shared the stage with Gov. Andrew Cuomo during his State of the State address. In a criminal complaint, authorities said Silver abused his power and "obtained about \$4 million in payments characterized as attorney referral fees solely through the corrupt use of his official position."

As speaker of the Democrat-controlled Assembly, Silver is one of the most influential people in New York state government. Along with the Senate majority leader and the governor, he plays a major role in creating state budgets, laws and policies in a system long-criticized in Albany as "three men in a room."

Silver's attorney, Joel Cohen, called the charges

"meritless."

"Mr. Silver looks forward to responding to them — in court — and ultimately his full exoneration," Cohen said in a statement.

Silver was expected to make a court appearance later Thursday.

An anti-corruption commission and U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara were looking into lawmakers' earnings outside their state salaries. Silver's outside income has long been a subject of discussion and controversy. Last year, he reported making up to \$750,000 for legal work, mostly with the trial firm of Weitz & Luxenberg.

When the commission began to investigate public corruption in 2013, including outside income earned by Silver and other state legislators, "Silver took legal action and other steps to prevent the disclosure of such information," the complaint said. □

## Tsarnaev lawyers ask again to move trial out of Boston

**DENISE LAVOIE**

**AP Legal Affairs Writer**

**BOSTON (AP)** — Lawyers for Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev are making a third push to move his trial outside Massachusetts, citing a large number of prospective jurors who already believe he's guilty and the personal connections many have to the attack. Tsarnaev's lawyers renewed their bid for a change of venue on Thursday, the same day court officials announced that opening statements will not be heard as expected on Monday because jury selection is taking longer than anticipated.

Tsarnaev is accused of 30 crimes — including 17 capital crimes — for allegedly working with his brother, Ta-

merlan, to plan and carry out the 2013 attack, which killed three people and injured more than 260. Tamerlan Tsarnaev died in a shootout with police days after the bombings.

The defense cited the attitudes of prospective jurors in the case, saying of the 1,373 prospective jurors who filled out questionnaires, 68 percent already believe Tsarnaev is guilty and 69 percent have a self-identified "connection" or expressed allegiance to the people, places and/or events in the case.

"Stronger support for a finding of presumed prejudice in Boston is difficult to imagine, and the existing record precludes a fair trial in Boston," Tsarnaev's lawyers wrote in their motion. □

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## US Financial Front:

# American jobless aid applications drop for 1st time in 4 weeks

C. S. RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell last week for the first time in a month, a sign that layoffs remain low and hiring is probably still healthy.

The Labor Department says that weekly applications dropped 10,000 to a seasonally adjusted 307,000. The decline comes after applications spiked the previous week to a seven-month high.

Most of the volatility reflects widespread layoffs of temporary employees hired by retailers, restaurants and other companies for the winter holidays. The government seeks to adjust the data for those seasonal trends, but doesn't always do so perfectly. Applications have been near or below 300,000

since September, a historically low level that suggests companies are cutting few workers. Instead, strong economic growth in the spring and summer has encouraged employers to add more jobs.

"Through the volatility, claims are up a little recently," Jim O'Sullivan, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics, said in a note to clients. "The rise is too small to date to signal an uptrend, but the data merit watching."

Weekly applications averaged 308,000 in 2014, O'Sullivan noted, almost the same as last week's figure. Job gains averaged 246,000 a month last year, the most in 15 years.

Some companies are announcing large layoffs. American Express said Wednesday that it is cutting 4,000 jobs, or about 6 percent of its workforce.



Russell Neal, left, gives job information to job seeker Queena Moise, foreground second from right, at a job fair in Miami Lakes, Fla. The U.S. Labor Department reported on the number of people who applied for unemployment benefits the week ending Jan. 17, 2015 on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015. (AP Photo/Alan Diaz)

Even with the recent increases, applications are still lower than a year ago. The four-week average, a less volatile measure, rose to 307,000. □

## Airlines expect another big year on cheaper fuel costs

DAVID KOENIG

AP Airlines Writer

**DALLAS (AP)** — Leaders of United and Southwest gave an upbeat forecast for 2015 that combined strong travel demand and cheaper fuel. Airline stocks soared on Thursday.

The price of jet fuel has dropped by about half since September, boosting airline profits and tamping down fear that global economic weakness could hurt the carriers. Analysts expect all four of the biggest U.S. airline operators to post bigger profits this year than in 2014.

United Continental Holdings Inc. predicted first-quarter profit margins higher than many analysts had expected.

Southwest Airlines Co. expects its fuel bill for 2015 to be \$1.7 billion lower than in 2014. "Our earnings outlook is superb if for no other reason than fuel costs are down dramatically," said CEO Gary Kelly.

However, both companies reported lower fourth-quarter profit than a year earlier because of losses

on contracts to protect against sharply higher fuel prices. Those contracts, called hedges, lose value when oil prices fall.

Southwest's net income dropped 10 percent to \$190 million, as it booked \$282 million in hedging write-downs. United's net income plunged 80 percent, to \$28 million, because of \$433 million in special items, including \$225 million in hedging write-downs and \$141 million for severance to flight attendants who took early retirement.

Southwest said it is now essentially unhedged for 2015, while United has closed out nearly all first-quarter hedges, executives told analysts.

Hedging has been practiced by most major U.S. airlines for almost a decade. Despite the hedging losses reported this week by Southwest, United and Delta Air Lines Inc., finance experts say hedging can still be a smart move — protection against catastrophically high fuel prices. □



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## Yemen's US-backed president quits amid chaos

AHMED AL-HAJ  
MAGGIE MICHAEL  
Associated Press

**SANAA, Yemen (AP)** — Yemen's U.S.-backed president quit Thursday under pressure from rebels holding him captive in his home, severely complicating American efforts to combat al-Qaida's powerful local franchise and raising fears that the Arab world's poorest country will fracture into mini-states. Presidential officials said Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi submitted his resignation to parliament rather than make further concessions to Shiite rebels, known as Houthis, who control the

authorities in Aden, the capital of southern region of Yemen, would no longer submit to the central government's authority. Even before the Houthis' recent ascendance, a powerful movement in southern Yemen was demanding autonomy or a return to the full independence the region enjoyed before 1990. Southerners outrightly reject rule by the Houthis, whose power base is in the north. The Houthis are Zaydis, a Shiite minority that makes up about a third of Yemen's population. Concerns were also mounting about an economic collapse. Two-thirds of Ye-

are already undermining military and intelligence operations against al-Qaida's Yemen-based affiliate, which made its reach felt in this month's deadly Paris attacks.

Hadi's resignation comes four months after President Barack Obama cited Yemen as a terrorism success story in a September speech outlining his strategy against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria, which involves targeted U.S. strikes on militants with the cooperation of a friendly ground force. Obama called it an approach "that we have successfully pursued in Yemen

## Saudi King Abdullah

Continued from page 3

Alarmed by the prospect of a rift, President George W. Bush soon after advocated for the first time the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

He also pushed the Obama administration to take a tougher stand against Iran and to more strongly back the mainly Sunni rebels fighting to overthrow Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Abdullah was born in Riyadh in 1924, one of the dozens of sons of Saudi Arabia's founder, King Abdul-Aziz Al Saud. Like all Abdul-Aziz's sons, Abdullah had only rudimentary education. His strict upbringing was exemplified by three days he spent in prison as a young man as punishment by his father for failing to give his seat to a visitor, a violation of Bedouin hospitality. His aim at home was to modernize the kingdom to face the future.

One of the world's largest oil exporters, Saudi Arabia is fabulously wealthy, but there are deep disparities in wealth and a burgeoning youth population in need of jobs, housing and education. More than half the current population of 20 million is under the age of 25. He was a strong supporter of education, building universities at home and increasing scholarships abroad for Saudi students.

Abdullah for the first time gave women seats on the Shura Council, an unelected body that advises the king and government.

He promised women would be able to vote and run in 2015 elections for municipal councils, the only elections held in the country. He appointed the first female deputy minister in 2009. Two Saudi female athletes competed in the Olympics for the first time in 2012, and a small handful of women were granted licenses to work as lawyers during his rule.

One of his most ambitious projects was a Western-style university that bears his name, the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, which opened in 2009. Men and women share classrooms and study together inside the campus, a major departure in a country where even small talk between the sexes in public can bring a warning from the morality police. But he treaded carefully in the face of the ultraconservative Wahhabi clerics who hold near total sway over society and, in return, give the Al Saud family's rule religious legitimacy.

"He has presided over a country that has inched forward, either on its own or with his leadership," said Karen Elliot House, author of "On Saudi Arabia: Its People, Past, Religion, Fault Lines."

"I don't think he's had as much impact as one would hope on trying to create a more moderate version of Islam," she said. "To me, it has not taken inside the country as much as one would hope."

After the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks took place in the United States, Abdullah had to steer his country's alliance with Washington through the resulting criticism. The kingdom was home to 15 of the 19 hijackers, and many pointed out that the baseline ideology for al-Qaida and other groups stemmed from Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi interpretation of Islam.

When al-Qaida militants in 2003 began a wave of violence in the kingdom aimed at toppling the monarchy, Abdullah cracked down hard. For the next three years, security forces battled militants, finally forcing them to flee to neighboring Yemen. There, they created a new al-Qaida branch, and Saudi Arabia has played a behind-the-scenes role in fighting it.

The tougher line helped affirm Abdullah's commitment to fighting al-Qaida. □



Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi speaks during the closing session of the national dialogue conference in Sanaa, Yemen. Hadi submitted his resignation Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015, over a standoff with Shiite rebels who control the capital.

(AP Photo/Yemen's Defense Ministry)

capital and are widely believed to be backed by Iran. The prime minister and his cabinet also stepped down, making a thinly veiled reference to the Houthis' push at gunpoint for a greater share of power. Houthis deployed their fighters around parliament, which is due to discuss the situation on Sunday.

Yemeni law dictates that the parliament speaker — Yahia al-Rai, a close ally of former autocratic ruler Ali Abdullah Saleh — will now assume the presidency. Saleh still wields considerable power and is widely believed to be allied with the Houthis.

There were conflicting reports suggesting that au-

men's population are already in need of humanitarian aid, according to reported U.N. figures. Iran's regional rival Saudi Arabia, which has long been Yemen's economic lifeline, cut most of its financial aid to Yemen after the Houthis seized the capital in September. The Houthis deny receiving any Iranian support.

The Houthis' recent encroachments on Sunni areas have also fanned fears of a sectarian conflict that could fuel support for al-Qaida, a Sunni movement that has links to some of the country's tribes and is at war with both the Shiites and Hadi's forces. U.S. officials say the developments

and Somalia for years."

In Washington on Thursday, a senior State Department said the U.S. Embassy remains open and will continue to operate as normal, although with reduced staff. The official says the U.S. is continuously reassessing the situation on the ground.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to publicly discuss embassy security.

The resignations mark the collapse of an internationally backed transition that compelled Saleh, who ruled for three decades, to resign in 2012 following months of Arab Spring protests. □



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## ECB unleashes aggressive efforts to revive economy

**DAVID McHUGH**

**Associated Press**

**FRANKFURT, Germany (AP)**

— Europe's ailing economy will get a major dose of stimulus from the European Central Bank — a bond buying program designed to make loans and exports cheaper so companies can hire and expand.

Starting in March, the ECB will buy 60 billion euros' worth of government and corporate bonds each month at least through September 2016. The 1.1 trillion euro program was an em-

phatic signal of the ECB's willingness to do all it can to rejuvenate the economy shared by the 19-nation euro currency alliance.

ECB President Mario Draghi pledged Thursday to extend the bond buying if needed until the bank saw a significant upturn in the eurozone's excessively low inflation, which threatens to become a downward spiral.

Stocks rallied in Europe and the United States after the ECB's announcement, with the Dow Jones industrial av-

erage jumping 259 points, or 1.5 percent. The euro's value, meanwhile, plunged nearly 2 percent against the dollar to its lowest level in 11 years in anticipation that the ECB's bond purchases will drive down the currency. A lower-valued euro would make European exports more affordable overseas.

The ECB's purchases will flood the economy with money that the central bank will create — a power it wields as the euro's legal issuer. Its chief mandate

is to maintain price stability. It's fallen well short of its goal of 2 percent annual inflation, considered consistent with a healthy economy. The current rate is minus 0.2 percent.

Fears have spread that the eurozone could face chronic falling prices, or deflation. Though low or falling inflation is often welcomed by shoppers, it reflects sluggish demand and can paralyze an already weak economy — a problem that has long afflicted Japan, the world's third-

largest economy.

The eurozone is still working off a crisis over excessive government debt in countries like Greece, Portugal and Ireland. The alliance's economy has lagged even as the United States and Britain have recovered more robustly from the financial crisis and Great Recession. Unemployment is 11.5 percent across the currency union, and 26 percent in Greece. In the United States, by contrast, the unemployment rate is 5.6 percent. □

## Officials detail Islamic State kills, but hard part ahead

**KEN DILANIAN**

**LOLITA C. BALDOR**

**Associated Press**

**LONDON (AP)**

— The U.S. and its allies sought to put a good face on the coalition's deliberate campaign to roll back the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria on Thursday, boasting of having killed thousands of militants while acknowledging that ousting the group from key cities remains a distant aspiration.

Speaking to reporters in London alongside the British foreign minister and Iraqi prime minister, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said nearly 2,000 air strikes had arrested the Islamic State group's momentum, squeezed its finances, killed "in the single digit" thousands of fighters



**Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, center, and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, right, listen as Britain's Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond speaks during a press conference at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London, Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry says Iraq and its international partners have made significant gains in the fight against Islamic State militants, killing thousands of the group's fighters and 50 percent of its leadership.**

(AP Photo/Peter Nicholls, Pool)

and eliminated half of the group's leadership.

Kerry's remarks came as Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi told The Associated Press a day before the London meeting that the U.S. and its partners weren't moving fast enough in supplying Iraq with weapons.

"There is a lot being said and spoken, but very little on the ground," al-Abadi told the AP.

Those comments were met with a sharp rebuke from Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel at the Pentagon.

"I do disagree with the prime minister's comments. I would say even further, I don't think they're helpful," Hagel told reporters.

"We have a coalition of over 60 countries that have come together to help Iraq. □

## Venezuela leader rejects devaluation amid faltering economy

**HANNAH DREIER**

**JOSHUA GOODMAN**

**Associated Press**

**CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)**

— President Nicolas Maduro announced a boost in wages this week and dismissed talk of currency devaluation as he tries to pull oil-dependent Venezuela out of a recession and quell mounting frustration with his socialist policies.

In a much-anticipated annual address to the legislature, Maduro avoided the dramatic reengineering of price and currency controls that economists say is

needed to avoid a triple-digit inflationary spiral.

Through nearly three hours of optimistic rhetoric embellished by props and a video, he repeated accusations that the opposition is sabotaging the economy and urged Venezuelans to hold faith that government programs will continue despite a nearly 60 percent fall in the price of oil, virtually the country's only export. He unveiled a new round of social spending, including promises to raise wages and pensions 15 percent, deliver 400,000 new homes

for the poor and increase grants for students.

The only hint that the embattled leader was considering a turn toward austerity were proposals to increase gasoline prices and add transparency to the multi-tiered currency exchange rate system blamed by economists for much of the South American country's economic troubles.

Maduro called Venezuela's lowest-in-the-world gas prices a "distortion," but stopped short of actually raising them. Gas costs the equivalent of 5 U.S. cents a

gallon.

Venezuelan currency can currently be exchanged at three rates, and the bolivar will continue to be exchanged at three rates under the new system. The best rate will remain the same and will be used for essentials like food and medicine, as it is now. The other two current rates will be merged and a new, third rate is being introduced for the exchange of local currency through private dealers. Maduro did not provide details.

Earlier Wednesday, the In-

ternational Monetary Fund predicted that Venezuela's economy would contract 7 percent this year, while the rest of the region sees moderate growth. Maduro said in his speech that the economy contracted 2.8 percent in 2014 and acknowledged worsening shortages.

He called on Venezuelans to "come together and work to overcome our economic difficulties," adding that while oil prices are unlikely to bounce back to the highs of last year, "God will provide." □





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## Preservationists fight to save Haiti's gingerbread homes

DAVID McFADDEN

Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)

— It wasn't until the 2010 earthquake devastated Haiti's capital that many people even realized that dozens of the city's grandest old buildings were still standing — its quirky and ornate "gingerbread houses" with their fancy latticework, turrets and spires.

Amid the destruction, some Haitians realized time was running out to save the architectural gems, often hidden behind concrete walls, that had been steadily vanishing to bulldozers and cheap renovations as Port-au-Prince became a sprawling and overcrowded city. "It was when the concrete walls and structures crumbled all around them that you suddenly saw these gingerbread houses from the street," said Lucie Couet, a French city planner working for a Haitian nonprofit group trying to safeguard the old dwellings.

Now, there's an uphill race to save them the graceful structures that, unlike the tens of thousands of modern concrete buildings leveled by the 7.0-magnitude quake, often emerged largely unscathed because of the flexibility of their wooden frames.

Local craftsmen working for the Haitian nonprofit Knowledge & Freedom Foundation, or FOKAL, are learning how to restore the homes to their former splendor. Since masonry and carpentry skills aren't being passed down the generations as they used to be, the dozen young builders are being trained how to work with imported wood, ochre-colored bricks and lime mortar instead of contemporary concrete blocks and cement.



A man walks next to a "gingerbread house" in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. It wasn't until the 2010 earthquake devastated Haiti's capital that many people even realized that dozens of the city's grandest old buildings were still standing — its quirky and ornate "gingerbread houses" with their fancy latticework, turrets and spires. (AP Photo/Dieu Nalio Chery)

"These old houses are works of Haitian art, not like the concrete block boxes that replaced them," trainee Jean Lucknor Lefevre said while using a trowel to mix lime mortar in a wheelbarrow at one of two dilapidated gingerbread homes

bought by FOKAL in hopes of restoring them into showpieces of cultural preservation.

The group's president, former Prime Minister Michele Pierre-Louis, said the roughly 200 gingerbreads still standing in Port-au-Prince are an

important part of the national identity. While their restoration might be seen as inessential given the sheer scope of Haiti's housing problems, she believes it is imperative to protect the troubled country's architectural heritage.

"You see there is a trend, a tendency to say since you are poor, it's like you don't deserve this type of thing (restoration efforts). This is really what we have been fighting against," said Pierre-Louis, whose group is getting support from the New York-based World Monuments Fund and the Walloon Heritage Institute in Belgium.

The hurdles are many. Unlike in many countries in the developed world, Haiti has no government subsidies for restoring privately owned, historic buildings. And as the price of real estate soars amid quake reconstruction, owners of land with gingerbread homes are being enticed by offers from developers wanting to build offices or apartments. Still, some families say they are determined to safeguard their treasured properties for future generations, and FOKAL is providing technical assistance to homeowners who have the financial means to pay for renovations. □

## Jamaica official says marijuana reform bill ready

DAVID McFADDEN

Associated Press

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP)

— Jamaica's Cabinet has approved a much-anticipated bill of drug law amendments that would decriminalize possession of small amounts of pot and pave the way for a legal medical marijuana industry on the Caribbean island, the justice minister said this week.

Following the Cabinet's authorization, Justice Minister Mark Golding said he expects to introduce the legislation in the Senate by the end of this week. Debate could start before the end of the month in the pot-steeped coun-

try where the drug, known popularly as "ganja," has long been culturally entrenched but illegal.

Golding said the bill would establish a "cannabis licensing authority" to deal with the various regulations needed to cultivate, sell and distribute marijuana for medical, scientific and therapeutic purposes.

"We need to position ourselves to take advantage of the significant economic opportunities offered by this emerging industry," Golding said. It would make possession of 2 ounces or less a ticketable offense that would not result in a criminal re-

cord. Cultivation of five or fewer plants on any premises would be permitted. Rastafarians who use marijuana as a sacrament could also legally use cannabis for religious purposes for the first time in Jamaica, where the spiritual movement was founded in the 1930s. For decades, debate has raged in Jamaica over relaxing laws prohibiting ganja. But now, with a number of countries and U.S. states relaxing their marijuana laws the Jamaican government is advancing reform plans. Golding stressed that the government will not soften its stance on transna-

tional drug trafficking and it intends to use a portion of revenues from its new licensing authority to support a public education campaign to discourage pot smoking by youngsters and mitigate public health consequences.

The head of Jamaica's Cannabis Commercial and Medicinal Research Taskforce said he expected the bill to be passed soon in Parliament, where Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller's governing party holds a 2-to-1 majority.

"The development is long overdue," task force director Delano Seiveright said. □



# At Davos, Merkel upstaged, more protests, and currency wars

The Associated Press

**DAVOS, Switzerland (AP) —**

The World Economic Forum held in the Swiss ski resort of Davos has the official goal of "improving the state of the world." In practice, it's a massive networking event that brings together 2,500 heads of state, business leaders, philanthropists and artists.

Here are some glimpses of what's happening and being discussed Thursday at Davos:

## MERKEL UPSTAGED

It's not often that German Chancellor Angela Merkel gets upstaged — but upstaged she was as she arrived to speak before the World Economic Forum. As Merkel returned to Swiss ski resort following her absence last year due to a broken leg, all eyes were on Frankfurt as Mario Draghi, president of the European Central Bank, delivered the news that the ECB was ready to buy government bonds on a massive scale to oil the wheels of the eurozone's ailing economy. During Merkel's speech, many in the audience



German Chancellor Angela Merkel speaks during a panel session of the 45th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, WEF, in Davos, Switzerland, Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015. The meeting runs from Jan. 21 through Jan. 24. (AP Photo/Keystone, Laurent Gillieron)

were scrolling social media to get the details about Draghi.

Merkel said little to take the spotlight away from Draghi but declared whatever the ECB did, it wouldn't be enough. EU governments have to continue to reform their economies to get more competitive, she said. Some have been

forced to do so in return for bailout money, such as Portugal and Ireland. Others, such as Italy and France, are now doing so too, she said.

On non-economic matters, Merkel said the terror attacks in Paris had "woken us up thoroughly." She also said there was no military solution to the conflict in Ukraine and that any solution rested on the Ukraine's territorial integrity being "restored," first in eastern Ukraine around Donetsk. Crimea, which Russia has annexed, is "not forgotten," she added.

## FEMEN PROTEST

A Frenchwoman took an early morning train from Paris and by mid-afternoon was baring her breasts in a protest in Davos against the financial world. The woman was a member of the activist group Femen, which also targeted the World Economic Forum two years ago. Police detained her and escorted her away.

Femen has used similar tactics around the world to get its point across, including at the Vatican.

## LET'S GET TOGETHER

Ayad Allawi, Iraq's vice president, reckons the time is right for all oil producers around the world to meet up to forge a common approach to the oil market,

which has been turned on its head over the past few months.

Oil producers are currently split between the oil cartel OPEC, of which Iraq is part, and the rest, which includes notable producers such as Russia. OPEC's decision last November to not cut production has been a major reason why oil prices have tanked over the past few weeks. Though the slide in oil prices — around 60 percent since last June — is welcome for oil importers, it's caused a lot of pain to producers, notably Russia.

In an interview with The Associated Press on Thursday at the World Economic Forum, Allawi said "frankly speaking, it's high-time to get a conference ongoing of all producing countries to decide the oil issue." Allawi also said prices would "definitely" go up a bit toward the end of the year from current levels around \$50 a barrel toward the \$60 to \$70 range.

## IT'S COLDPLAY

Surrounded by nearly 200 snowmen, Chris Martin, frontman of the British band Coldplay, joined forces with Virgin boss Richard Branson in backing a new initiative to pressure business and political leaders to deal with poverty, growing inequalities around the world and climate change.

The two put their weight behind Action/2015, an umbrella movement that is trying to underline the need for the global elite to back initiatives this year to deal with the big issues. To do so, Action/2015 supporters built 193 snowmen on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, each representing a nation, neatly attired with a flag scarf.

This year is a big one for activists. In September, global leaders are set to meet to update their efforts to fight poverty, followed three months later by international climate talks in Paris.

## GREEK FORGIVENESS

The Greek elections due Sunday are making EU leaders uneasy.

Greece's left-wing Syriza party, which is leading in the polls, has been calling for easier terms on bailout loans the country owes to fellow EU countries. Some fear that if it does come to power, a big disagreement on this point could push Greece to leave the euro, the common currency used by 19 European nations.

European leaders don't want to forgive Greece's debt outright. But they also recognize that, if Syriza wins, they will have to negotiate with a democratically elected government. "It will be very difficult for us to forgive any loans or restructure debt at this particular moment," said Alexander Stubb, the prime minister of Finland. "We can look at different kinds of extensions, at different kind of programs," he added, referring to longer repayment periods or lower interest rates.

## CURRENCY WARS

The world's central banks are competing to weaken their currencies, says Goldman Sachs President Gary Cohn.

Central banks provide stimulus to help their economies, but a convenient side effect is that such stimulus weighs on the currency, helping the country's exporters compete in the global market. □

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## At The Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino: Hotel Manager Matt Knights Embarks On A New Adventure



**PALM BEACH** - It is with great pride that the Aruba Marriott congratulates Matt Knights with accepting the position of opening General Manager for the completely renovated Renaissance Jaragua in Santo Domingo.

Matt joined the Aruba Marriott in 2013 as the Hotel Manager for the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino and has shown great leadership in improving the hotel's performance in all areas of operation. His performance program "Wiggy" was tremendously successful and it was his commitment to the program that

translated in consistent improvements throughout. "While we are extremely sad to see him go, we believe that this new role is

very well deserved and very well fitted for Matt. We congratulate Matt, Sheila his wife and their three beautiful children with this new adventure and wish them the best of luck in Santo Domingo" said Complex General Manager Tom Calame.

To thank Matt for a job well done, a farewell party was organized on his last work day, where management and staff took the opportunity to show their gratitude by sharing kind words and memorable moments through thoughtful speeches and a carefully put together photo collage and video. □





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cultural dances. Different stores and restaurants will have special discounts and incentives on this day, including 50% off on select items at both Baci da Roma and DLG; at Scala Restaurant, all prices normally in US dollars will be in Aruban Florins for the event; Sky lounge will serve "Aruba Riba" and "Du-shi Jui" for only \$5 dollars the whole night; and restaurants will have special menus for the event. There will be coconut water and different typical sweets of Aruba, and don't forget the fascinating water show to the musical rhythms of our father of culture, Padu.

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**PALM BEACH** – This Sunday, January 25th, Paseo Herencia will be celebrating Betico Day with well known dance group 'Youth In Action,' who will entertain everyone with their diverse



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## Marilina Marcano Kuiperi Celebrates 20 Years in Tourism Industry



**NOORD** - Marilina, a key tourism industry, celebrated an important anniversary recently, completing twenty years of service at her resort. She started working at her resort as the secretary to the general manager and at the end of five years in that position transitioned to the reservations department where she fulfils a very important

role, as reservations assistant, directly responsible for the successful occupancy of the hotel. Her colleagues report that Marilina is dedicated, loyal, helpful, and resourceful. She loves her work and over the past years has amassed an impressive number of awards as the recipient of many Extra

Mile citations, Employee of the 4th Quarter 2014, and best of all Employee of the Year 2014. As a mother of two she is proud of her accomplished and good-looking kids, especially her daughter Kimberly, the cover model of a recent edition of a local island magazine. Born in Venezuela, Mari-

lina has been living in Aruba for 26 years, and in her spare time, she loves to practice Zumba, go to church, watch movies and visit her family members and friends. Pictured here Marilina with members of management during a lunch celebration in her honor at Taste Of Belgium. □



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*Sidebar is the newest restaurant on Aruba, and oh boy, it is a beauty! Unique in a trendy, sassy and sexy way, it is ready to welcome all of you.*



*Common ground* and denominating factor of the guests includes the enjoyment of life, in particular the good things, such as great bistro food, wonderful drinks and a relaxed, happy atmosphere. Sidebar is the name of a stylish, hip restaurant on the side of the Renaissance Marketplace; just hop inside, sit at the bar or on the amazing porch and enjoy – the party at Sidebar starts at 8 am and goes on until midnight.

*At Sidebar* you can sit in a booth, on a lounge chair, on a bar stool or stand at a cocktail table. Side Bar is all about options, so go and check it out on the far end corner of the Renaissance Marketplace.

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## Boston Couple Are Regulars at Tango Restaurant



**PALM BEACH** - In the past eight years that Susan and Herman Roberts from Boston, Massachusetts, have been coming to Aruba, they always made sure to stop for dinner at Tango Argentine Restaurant in the Arawak Garden on

the hi-rise strip. They go there for the superb filet mignon and grilled grouper, their favorite menu options. Tango is one of five popular restaurants surrounding a cozy plaza with nightly live music. There are also small shops to browse in; the Arawak Gar-

den is located across from the Occidental Resort. For Susan and Herman Aruba is an easy holiday destination, as they are crazy about the island, its weather, the people and the wonderful beaches. Great to know and see you next year, Susan and Herman!







# NEW BALL GAME

## Brady, Belichick clueless about deflated footballs

Official game balls for NFL football's Super Bowl XLIX sit in a bin before being laced and inflated at the Wilson Sporting Goods Co. in Ada, Ohio, Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2015.  
Associated Press  
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# Brady, Belichick offer no explanation for deflated footballs

HOWARD ULMAN

AP Sports Writer

FOXBOROUGH, Massachu-  
setts (AP) —

The two men most responsible for delivering wins for the New England Patriots both said on Thursday they have no explanation for how footballs used to reach the Super Bowl were underinflated. Patriots quarterback Tom Brady said he has not been contacted by the NFL, even as league officials investigate whether the team cheated against the Indianapolis Colts in the AFC Championship last Sunday.

"I don't know what happened," Brady said, answering questions from reporters hours after Patriots coach Bill Belichick said he almost never thinks about football pressure,



New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady speaks at a news conference in Foxborough, Mass., Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015 as he addresses the issue of the NFL investigation of deflated footballs.

Associated Press

and doesn't know how the game balls came to be 2 pounds per square inch under regulations.

of anything, any wrongdoing," Brady said when asked who on the Patriots was responsible for the underinflated footballs. "I'm very comfortable saying nobody did it as far as I know."

Brady said he picks the game balls he wants to use several hours before kickoff, then doesn't think about them at all. He said he didn't know the protocol for handling game balls after he chooses them.

"Once I approve the ball, that's the ball that I expect out there on the field," Brady said. "It wasn't even a thought, inkling, or concern of mine that they weren't the same ball."

Belichick said that before this week, he didn't give air pressure in footballs much thought at all.

"I've learned a lot more about this process in the last three days than I knew or have talked about it in the last 40 years that I've coached in this league," Belichick said during an 8 1/2-minute opening statement during an 11 1/2-minute news conference in the morning.

While neither Belichick nor Brady took responsibility for the underinflated balls, neither absolved anyone besides themselves of potential wrongdoing.

"I felt like we won the game fair and square," Brady said. "I feel like I've always played within the rules. I would never do anything to break the rules."

Softer balls are generally considered easier to throw and catch, and quarterbacks, specialists and equipment managers are known to have very individualized preferences in how footballs are readied for games. Belichick said he was unaware of the process for game balls until the accusations were raised.

Belichick said he sometimes hears quarterbacks, kickers and other specialists talk about their preferences.

"I can tell you and they will tell you that there is never any sympathy from me whatsoever on that subject. Zero," Belichick said. □

"I didn't alter the ball in any way," Brady said.

Unlike Belichick, who briefly answered questions after a long opening remark by repeatedly saying "I've told you everything I know" and "I don't have an explanation," Brady answered many questions and said he doesn't think about the condition of the football during games.

"I get the snap, I drop back, I throw the ball," Brady said. "I don't sit there and try to squeeze it and determine that."

He does, however, have his preferences — he likes the football to be pumped to 12.5 pounds per square inch of air pressure, he said. The NFL requires balls to be inflated between 12.5 and 13.5 pound per square inch. Brady said he never has knowingly played with a ball with less than 12.5 pounds per square inch of pressure. "To me, that's a perfect grip for the football," said Brady, who will face the Seattle Seahawks in the Super Bowl on Feb. 1 in Glendale, Arizona. "I would never do anything outside the rules of play."

With different approaches, Belichick and Brady sent a unified message: Both said they have no clue how the footballs were tampered with or switched, and started learning about the issue along with fans and everyone else.

"I have no knowledge

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## 4-time NASCAR champ Gordon makes 2015 season his last

**DAN GELSTON**  
AP Sports Writer

Jeff Gordon, the charismatic four-time NASCAR champion who became the face of the stock car series as it exploded in popularity a generation ago, will retire as a full-time driver after the 2015 season.

Gordon did not officially call his decision a retirement on Thursday because there is "always the possibility I'll compete in selected events, although I currently have no plans to do that." He has spent his entire 23-year career in the No. 24 car with Hendrick Motorsports, and he delivered the news to his team at its shop in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"As a race car driver, much of what I've done throughout my life has been based on following my instincts and trying to make good decisions," Gordon said. "I thought long and hard about my future this past year and during the offseason, and I've decided 2015 will be the last time I compete for a championship." The 43-year-old Gordon is coming off one of his best seasons in



In this Nov. 14, 2014, file photo, Jeff Gordon celebrates after qualifying laps for the EcoBoost 400 auto race in Homestead, Fla. Associated Press

years, one that ended a single point short of another shot at a title. He won four times in 2014. Gordon suffered serious issues years ago in his back, specifically his lower spine, and needed anti-inflammatory medication and workouts with a trainer to return to full strength. He drove in pain during a winless 2008 season and briefly contemplated retirement. He did not cite health issues in Thursday's an-

nouncement.

Gordon's fame reaches far beyond the track and resonates with non-sports fans. He won all the big races, and collected four championships in a seven-year span.

He was a new breed of driver when he broke into NASCAR's top series, arriving with a sprint car pedigree and talent that made him an immediate contender. Gordon was a clean-

cut kid who raised NASCAR's corporate image beyond its moonshine roots, making it a legitimate power on Madison Avenue as tens of thousands of new fans flocked to automobile racing in the late 1990s and 2000s.

Gordon became such a household name that he even hosted "Saturday Night Live" and was name-dropped in a Nelly song. He did it all while dominating as the "Rainbow Warrior."

Gordon debuted in the final race of the 1992 season at Atlanta, and heads into this season with 92 career wins and championships in 1995, 1997, 1998 and 2001. Gordon is third in career victories, trailing only Hall of Fame drivers Richard Petty (200) and David Pearson (105). He has three Daytona 500 victories and a record five Brickyard 400 wins, including last year's race.

Gordon has won at every track on the circuit except Kentucky Speedway. His four championships trail Petty and Dale Earnhardt, who won seven each, and Jimmie Johnson, with six. □





Pittsburgh Penguins' Paul Martin (7) upends Chicago Blackhawks' David Rundblad (5) as he crosses the blue line during the third period of an NHL hockey game in Pittsburgh Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2015.

Associated Press

## NHL Capsules

# Toews, Kane lift Blackhawks by Penguins 3-2 in OT

**The Associated Press**

**PITTSBURGH (AP)** — Jonathan Toews and Patrick Kane beat Marc-Andre Fleury in a shootout to lift the Chicago Blackhawks over the Pittsburgh Penguins 3-2 on Wednesday night.

Toews flipped a shot between Fleury's legs in the first round, and Kane followed with a wrist shot over Fleury's glove to help the Blackhawks win in Pittsburgh for just the second time in 17 years.

David Rundblad and Marian Hossa scored in regulation for Chicago. Corey Crawford made 33 saves

and held Pittsburgh's David Perron and Sidney Crosby in check in the shootout. Zach Sill and Steve Downie scored for Pittsburgh. Fleury stopped 24 shots but the Penguins limped into the All-Star break with their fourth straight loss. The Penguins played without defenseman Kris Letang and center Evgeni Malkin.

### SENATORS 4, MAPLE LEAFS 3

**OTTAWA, Ontario (AP)** — Erik Karlsson scored two goals to lead Ottawa over struggling Toronto.

Mike Hoffman and Mika Zibanejad also scored for the Senators (19-18-9), and Craig Anderson stopped 37 shots.

David Clarkson, Nazem Kadri and James van Riemsdyk had goals for the Maple Leafs (22-23-3), who head into the NHL All-Star break on a six-game skid.

James Reimer made 22 saves and lost for just the second time at Ottawa (8-2).

Toronto made things interesting when Kadri's power-play goal at 2:36 of the third period cut the Maple Leafs' deficit to 3-2. Kadri took a pass from Morgan Rielly and beat a screened Anderson.

With 4:40 remaining, Karlsson scored his second of the night to make it 4-2. Van Riemsdyk scored with 1:23 left, but Toronto was unable to complete the comeback.

### DUCKS 6, FLAMES 3

**ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)** — Ben Lovejoy had a goal and an assist, Frederik Andersen made 30 saves, and Anaheim headed into the All-Star break on a five-game winning streak with a victory over Calgary.

Kyle Palmieri and Patrick Maroon scored in a three-goal first period for the NHL-leading Ducks, who beat the Flames in Anaheim for the 20th consecutive time since Jan. 19, 2004. Calgary

has won at Honda Center just once in this century.

Ryan Getzlaf, Tim Jackman and Ryan Kesler also scored as Anaheim (31-10-6) opened a three-point lead on Nashville atop the overall standings entering the break.

Mikael Backlund, Sean Monahan and Joe Colborne scored as the Flames' four-game winning streak ended in the finale of a five-game Pacific Division trip.

### AVALANCHE 3, BRUINS 2, SO

**DENVER (AP)** — Ryan O'Reilly tied the game with 1:45 left in regulation, and Nathan MacKinnon had the only goal in the shootout as Colorado rallied to beat Boston.

Jarome Iginla also scored for Colorado, and Semyon Varlamov stopped all three Boston shots in the tie-breaker.

Torey Krug and Brad Marchand had Bruins goals in regulation in the final game for both teams before the NHL All-Star break.

Trailing 2-1, Colorado, which went 0-6 on the power play, pulled Varlamov for an extra attacker with just over two minutes remaining. In a scramble in front of the net, O'Reilly lifted a backhanded shot over sprawled goalie Tuukka Rask to tie it.


Boston got even 1-1 on Krug's goal at 6:18 of the second.

### SHARKS 4, KINGS 2

**SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP)** — Patrick Marleau and Joe Pavelski scored power-play goals to send San Jose into the NHL All-Star break on a winning note with a victory over Los Angeles.

Logan Couture scored twice for the Sharks, who had lost five of their previous six home games. Antti Niemi made 15 of his 26 saves in the third period.

Dustin Brown and Jeff Carter scored for the Kings, who have lost seven of eight, although four came after regulation. Jonathan Quick made 21 saves.



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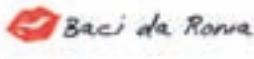
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# Curry gets angry, Warriors beat Rockets 126-113

**The Associated Press**  
**OAKLAND, California (AP)** — Stephen Curry got involved in a rare altercation before finishing with 22 points and 10 assists, and the Golden State Warriors held off the Houston Rockets 126-113 on Wednesday night for their franchise-record 17th straight home win. The typically mild-mannered Curry ran at Trevor Ariza after the Rockets forward bumped him on the way down court early in the third quarter. Curry had to be held back by teammates, and officials called a technical foul on Ariza following a video review. The Warriors had already grabbed control by outscoring Houston 30-13 in the second quarter. They led by 30 in the third before the Rockets' reserves made the final margin closer. Golden State swept the four-game season series against the Rockets for the first time since 1973-74. James Harden had 33 points and six assists for

Houston. **HAWKS 110, PACERS 91** ATLANTA (AP) — DeMarre Carroll and Jeff Teague each scored 17 points, Kyle Korver dunked for the first time in more than two years, and Atlanta tied a franchise record with its 14th straight win. With the victory, the Hawks improved to a stunning 35-8 and Mike Budenholzer clinched a spot as the Eastern Conference coach in next month's All-Star game in New York City. Budenholzer could be taking several players with him. The Hawks romped to their 28th victory in the last 30 games, showing the kind of teamwork that has become their trademark in a season that no one saw coming. CJ Miles led the Pacers with 18 points. Indiana shot just 39.7 percent. **THUNDER 105, WIZARDS 103, OT** WASHINGTON (AP) — Russell Westbrook drove for the winning layup with 0.8 sec-

onds left in overtime, and Kevin Durant scored 34 points in Oklahoma City's fourth consecutive victory. Durant and Westbrook scored all 13 of the Thunder's points in the extra period, including Durant's dunk over Marcin Gortat and Westbrook's uncontested layup off of an inbounds play after Oklahoma City had called timeout with 3.6 seconds remaining. Westbrook finished with 32 points and led a third-quarter comeback that made up a 12-point halftime deficit. Durant, the D.C. native whose 2016 free agency is much anticipated in his hometown, added seven rebounds. Nene scored 24 points for the Wizards, including nine of Washington's 11 points in overtime. John Wall had 28 points and 13 assists. **PISTONS 128, MAGIC 118** AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (AP) — Brandon Jennings had 24 points and a career-high 21 assists, and Detroit held on for the victory. □



Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) is held back by forward Draymond Green from going after Houston Rockets forward Trevor Ariza (1) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Oakland, Calif., Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2015. Associated Press

# Lakers say Kobe Bryant has torn rotator cuff

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Kobe Bryant tore his right rotator cuff in the Los Angeles Lakers' latest defeat, the club announced on Thursday. Bryant injured his right shoulder in the second half of the loss at New Orleans on Wednesday when he drove the baseline for a two-handed dunk. An exam in San Antonio revealed the tear, and Bryant headed home to Los Angeles while the Lakers prepared to play the Spurs on Friday. The Lakers declined to speculate on the severity of the injury, but many rotator cuff injuries require surgery and several months of rehabilitation. Bryant briefly returned to the game in New Orleans and played essentially with one arm after the injury, making a 14-foot jumper

with his left hand. He is a right-handed shooter. After the game, Bryant said it felt as if his shoulder "came out of joint a little bit" on the dunk. "I felt fine when I went up, and didn't feel too good when I came down," he said. Bryant is the third-leading scorer in NBA history, but he had played in just six games over the previous 18 months before this season began after recovering from two major leg injuries. Bryant has sat out eight games in the past month strictly to rest. Coach Byron Scott is attempting to preserve his 36-year-old superstar through the length of his contract, which extends to next season. Bryant is the NBA's highest-paid player this season,



In this Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2015, photo, Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant uses his left hand as he makes a shot during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the New Orleans Pelicans in New Orleans. Associated Press

making \$23.5 million this year, and \$25 million next year. Bryant is averaging 22.3 points, 5.7 rebounds and 5.6 assists per game. □

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# Aiming to emulate Serena, Azarenka advances at Aussie Open

**JOHN PYE**

**AP Sports Writer**

**MELBOURNE, Australia**

**(AP)** — Just like Serena Williams eight years ago, Victoria Azarenka entered the Australian Open as an unseeded player after an injury-plagued season.

Williams had won the Australian title twice before then — Azarenka can match that, too, after back-to-back triumphs here in 2012 and 2013.

All the dance moves and fashion distractions can't disguise the fact Azarenka wants to go where Williams has been — by being an unseeded winner of the season-opening Grand Slam event.

Both players advanced to the third round with straight sets wins on Thursday: Azarenka beat No. 8-seeded Caroline Wozniacki, the 2014 U.S. Open runner-up, 6-4, 6-2; top-ranked Williams had to save three set points, then won the last 10 games in a 7-5, 6-0 win over former No. 2-ranked Vera Zvonareva, a two-time Grand Slam finalist.

Asked how tough it was to cope with meeting a former No. 1-ranked player so early at a major, Azarenka said the stage doesn't matter.

"I knew that I'm unseeded so I can play anybody. I just accept whoever is on the opposite side," she said. "I just try to do my best. She had such an incredible end of last season so I knew I had to step up my game and really take my chances today. I think I did that pretty well."

Azarenka's ranking slipped into the 40s this month because of a series of injuries that restricted her to nine tournaments in 2014 — only the top 32 players get seedings at the majors. Serena Williams was ranked No. 81 after a long time on the sidelines but in 2007 became the first — and only other — unseeded winner of the Australian Open since Chris O'Neil, who was ranked No. 111 when she claimed the 1978 title. Williams has won two more Australian titles since then,

and is aiming for her sixth at Melbourne Park — and 19th Grand Slam title overall — this month.

After breaking Williams' serve twice and having three set points in the first, Zvonareva won only eight points in the second set. Williams just reminded herself of how successful she'd been in Australia, "and things really clicked."

"I had no other option but for things to click," she said. "I just had to start playing better."

Williams will next play No. 26 Elina Svitolina, who beat Nicole Gibbs 7-6 (3), 7-6 (6).

Venus Williams joined her sister in the third round with a 6-2, 6-3 win over fellow American Lauren Davis. Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova beat Mona Barthel 6-2, 6-4 and next faces Madison Keys, who rallied for a three-set win over No. 29 Casey Dellacqua.

No. 6 Agnieszka Radwanska, No. 11 Dominika Cibulkova, the 2014 finalist, No. 19 Alize Cornet and No. 24 Garbine Muguruza also advanced. Novak Djokovic advanced with a 6-0, 6-1, 6-4 win over No. 88-ranked Andrey Kuznetsov in 84 minutes.

Defending champion Stan Wawrinka, who ended four-time champion Djokovic's 25-match winning streak at Melbourne Park in the quarterfinals last year, had a tougher 7-6 (4), 7-6 (4), 6-3 win over No. 194-ranked qualifier Marius Copil.

"I don't compare from last year to this year. Just a new Grand Slam," said Wawrinka, who is defending a Grand Slam title for the first time. "It's been two matches now.



**Victoria Azarenka of Belarus makes a backhand return to Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark during their second round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015.**

**Associated Press**

Going to be ready now for the next one."

Wimbledon semifinalist Milos Raonic had a 6-4, 7-6 (3), 6-3 win against Donald

Australian Open.

U.S. Open finalist Kei Nishikori beat Ivan Dodig 4-6, 7-5, 6-2, 7-6 (0), moving into the third round along

6-4, 1-6, 6-7 (3), 6-3, 6-3 win over No. 17 Gael Monfils.

The third round starts Friday, with No. 2 seeds Roger Federer and Maria



**Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland hits a return to Marius Copil of Romania during their second round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015.**

**Associated Press**

Young and next plays Benjamin Becker, who came back from two sets down to end former No. 1-ranked Lleyton Hewitt's 19th consecutive run at the

with No. 9 David Ferrer, No. 12 Feliciano Lopez, No. 18 Gilles Simon, No. 19 John Isner and No. 31 Fernando Verdasco.

Jerzy Janowicz rallied for a

Sharapova playing matches one after each other on Rod Laver Arena, where the night cap will feature No. 3 Rafael Nadal against Dudi Sela. □



# Microsoft shows off Windows 10 and 'HoloLens'

**BRANDON BAILEY,**  
AP Technology Writer  
REDMOND, Wash. (AP) —

Microsoft on Wednesday took the wraps off a new version of Windows — and a new wearable 3D gadget it calls the HoloLens. The company showed the new headset, which lets users view and interact with three-dimensional images, at an event where it also revealed new features coming to the company's flagship operating software.

Executives said Windows 10 is designed to embrace the way people use computers today — offering a familiar experience as they switch back and forth from personal computers to tablets, smartphones and other gadgets such as gaming consoles or even holographic projectors.

While it's designed to let apps work in similar fashion on all those devices, Windows 10 will also come with a new Web browser that will be closely integrated with Cortana, the company's voice-activated answer to Siri. Microsoft is expanding Cortana to serve as a search engine and personal assistant, capable of answering questions and responding to commands such as "Play music" on desktop and laptop computers, as well as mobile devices.

And in a break from past practice, Microsoft announced that Windows 10 will be released later this year as a free upgrade for anyone owning a computer or gadget that's currently running Windows 8.1 or 7, the two previous versions of the software.

Microsoft is making a big bet that Windows 10 will help it regain ground the company has lost to the mobile computing boom. Windows has long been the dominating operating software for desktop and laptop computers, but that business has suffered as more people have begun using smartphones and tablets. Microsoft



Microsoft's Joe Belfiore, from left, Alex Kipman, and Terry Myerson playfully pose for a photo while wearing "HoloLens" devices following an event demonstrating new features of Windows 10 at the company's headquarters on Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2015, in Redmond, Wash.

Associated Press

tried to reach those users by emphasizing touch-screen features in its last update, Windows 8, but many traditional PC users found it jarring and difficult to navigate.

Hoping to win back a larger audience, Microsoft is promising Windows 10 will provide a familiar experience to users on across devices, and a common platform for software developers to create apps that work on all of them. "Windows 10 is built for a world in which there are going to be more devices on the planet than people," CEO Satya Nadella told reporters and industry analysts at Microsoft's headquarters. He said Microsoft wants to "enable that seamless cross-over, across devices as you move around at home and at work."

Rivals including Apple and Google have also been working toward that goal, by making apps that, for example, save files or photos created on a PC and let the user retrieve them on a smartphone. But analysts say new features in Windows 10 could give Microsoft an edge.

For example, Microsoft executives showed new versions of the company's Word app, its Outlook email service and a pho-

to-storage app that look and act similarly on different screen sizes. They also promise to synchronize files so that changes made on one device would appear when the

app is opened on another gadget.

Windows 10 will be used in Microsoft's Xbox gaming systems as well. A new Xbox app for computers running Windows 10 will

give gamers one place to find messages, video clips and games they have played on multiple devices. Microsoft gaming executive Phil Spencer also suggested programmers may eventually use Windows 10 to create other apps for TVs tied to an Xbox console.

As for the company's new hologram device, executives did not say when it will be available for sale. But they talked about using it for games as well as more serious purposes, such as helping a surgeon visualize a new operating technique or showing someone how to perform plumbing repairs. Nadella said it will be priced to appeal to both consumers and businesses.

And there won't be a Windows 9. Microsoft has skipped ahead in naming the next version, from Windows 8 to Windows 10, as though to put more distance between them. □

## LG to launch curved G Flex2 smartphone next week

**YOUKYUNG LEE**  
AP Technology Writer  
SEOUL, South Korea (AP) —

LG Electronics Inc. said it will start selling a new curved smartphone next week in its latest effort to bring the curve to a mass market.

The South Korean company said Thursday that the G Flex 2 will be launched locally on Jan. 30 and overseas in coming months.

Curved screens are a way of differentiating high smartphones that have come to share many similar features such as high resolution displays and powerful cameras.

When LG released its first version of a curved smartphone in 2013, it was a niche product. The latest iteration shows LG is targeting a bigger market.

The phone features a 5.5-inch screen curved from top to bottom. In an improvement from its predecessor, the phone's self-healing back can repair



Models pose with LG Electronics' G Flex 2 smartphones during a media event at its head office in Seoul, South Korea, Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015.

Associated Press

scratches in seconds rather than minutes. LG said both the screen and the body are more resilient to shocks than other phones. LG's hometown rival Samsung Electronics Co. is also experimenting with curved screens. Last year, Samsung released the Galaxy Note 4 Edge, which has a screen on its curved edge that displays information.

LG did not give a sales

target but executive vice president Cho Sung-ha said the company expects sales of the G Flex 2 to be higher than its predecessor.

LG did not adopt some of the latest technologies for the G Flex 2, such as quantum dot displays. Instead it has a full high-definition screen.

The G Flex 2 will sell for nearly 900,000 won (\$830) in South Korea. □



# Starbucks' 1Q profits soar on strong sales, traffic

**A. D'INNOCENZIO**

**AP Retail Writer**

**SEATTLE (AP)** — Starbucks Corp.'s fiscal first-quarter earnings soared 82 percent as the coffee chain attracted more customers who snapped up an expanded offerings of food and drinks over the holidays. Starbucks has enjoyed healthy sales growth, but is seeking to keep its momentum going by expanding

on a number of fronts.

To convince more customers to get something to eat with their drinks, the company has been introducing new and revamped baked goods, sandwiches and salads and wants to become more of a destination for grabbing a quick lunch. In the evenings, it plans to offer beer and wine in a quarter of its U.S. stores over the next five years.

The idea is to drive up sales throughout the day, not just during the morning rush when people are getting their caffeine fixes.

Another way it's driving sales is through its mobile app and loyalty program, which help get customers in the habit of visiting Starbucks rather than its competitors.

As it seeks to transform itself, Starbucks is undergoing a

major change at the top. It announced earlier this month that its chief operating officer, Troy Alstead, plans to take an "extended unpaid leave" after 23 years with the company. It said it was personal decision by Alstead, who wanted to spend more time with his family. Starbucks said it earned \$983.1 million in the quarter ended Dec. 28, or \$1.30 per share. That com-

pared with \$540.7 million or 71 cents per share, a year earlier. On a per-share basis, Starbucks said it had profit of \$1.30. Earnings, adjusted for non-recurring gains, were 80 cents per share. The results met Wall Street expectations. The average estimate of analysts surveyed by Zacks Investment Research was also for earnings of 80 cents per share. □

# Stocks rally, euro falls after Europe unveils stimulus plan

**MATTHEW CRAFT**

**AP Business Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — A plan to revive Europe's sagging economy rippled through the financial world on Thursday, setting off a rally in the stock market that wiped out its losses for the year. The pledge by the European Central Bank to spend 1.1 trillion euros on bonds knocked down government borrowing rates across Europe and drove the euro to its lowest level against the dollar in 11 years. For investors, the long wait for action in Europe was over. "It's all about the ECB today," said Jeff Kravetz, regional investment strategist at U.S. Bank Wealth Management. "This is a very positive development. They have a reputation of overpromising and underdelivering, and today they delivered."

The Standard & Poor's 500 index jumped 31.03 points, or 1.5 percent, to close at 2,063.15. That nudged it into positive territory for the year, up 0.2 percent.

The Dow Jones industrial average climbed 259.70 points, or 1.5 percent, to

17,813.98 while the Nasdaq climbed 82.98 points, or 1.8 percent, to 4,750.40.

The ECB announced Thursday that it would start buying 60 billion euros worth of government and private bonds every month, slightly more than what many in the markets anticipated. The central bank said the program will run 18 months, from this March until September of next year, but left open the option of extending the program if necessary.

That wiggle room is crucial, said Joseph Quinlan, chief market strategist at U.S. Trust. Turning around an economy often takes longer than people think. The Federal Reserve launched its first bond-buying effort at the end of 2008 and kept expanding it over the following years.

"The biggest positive is that it appears to be open-ended," Quinlan said. "As we learned in the U.S., it takes time for this to work."

Major markets in Europe ended the day with solid gains. Germany's DAX rose 1.3 percent and France's CAC-40 gained 1.5 percent.

Britain's FTSE 100 picked up 1 percent.

Prices for government bonds across Europe jumped, pushing yields to record lows. The yield on the 10-year German bond hit 0.39 percent. Borrow-

"Is there even enough debt for them to buy?"

The euro fell further against the U.S. dollar on Thursday, reaching \$1.13. The euro hasn't been that cheap since September 2003, according to FactSet data.



**Trader Edward Curran, right, works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. A plan to revive Europe's sagging economy rippled through the financial world on Thursday, setting off a rally in the stock market that wiped out its losses for the year. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)**

ing costs for governments in France, Italy and other countries also reached new lows.

"It's hard not to see this as a positive, but there will be lingering doubts," said Chris Rupkey, chief financial economist at the Bank of Tokyo, in a note to clients.

A weakened euro makes European goods cheaper, which could help boost exports from the region and lift inflation from dangerously low levels.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback against a basket of major currencies, climbed 1.6 per-

cent, putting it up 4.6 percent for the month.

A strong dollar has its drawbacks, especially for big U.S. corporations that depend on overseas sales. It raises prices for U.S. products in foreign countries, and means the revenue that U.S. companies collect in other currencies translates into fewer dollars when they bring the money home. A strong dollar, in other words, can pinch profits. For companies in the S&P 500 index, roughly half of total revenue comes from outside the United States. The strong dollar, for example, hurt Johnson & Johnson in the fourth quarter, and triggered a sell-off in its shares on Tuesday. Big-name companies turning in results on Thursday were spared damage from currency fluctuations, however. Southwest Airlines reported higher quarterly profit and revenue than Wall Street expected. The carrier said lower prices for jet fuel helped reduce costs, and estimated that it should save around half a billion dollars on fuel during the first three months of 2015. □

# Family Dollar shareholders approve Dollar Tree takeover

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The battle over dollar stores is nearly over. Family Dollar shareholders voted on Thursday to approve a takeover bid by rival Dollar Tree, despite higher competing offers from Dollar General.

The deal with Dollar Tree still needs to be approved by the Federal Trade Commission, but Family Dollar expects it to close by March.

Dollar Tree first offered to buy Matthews, North Carolina-based Family Dollar in July for about \$8.5 billion. Dollar General offered higher bids that were repeatedly rejected. Dollar General's pursuit of Family Dollar is now likely finished. It said in a statement that the vote was a loss for Family Dollar shareholders and shoppers, who would have benefited

from lower prices in its stores. "Family Dollar's lack of engagement and a contracted transaction timeline ultimately prevented us from completing this transaction," said Dollar General's CEO Rick Dreiling.

Dollar General's most recent bid for Family Dollar was about \$9.1 billion. Family Dollar said it rejected Dollar General's bids because

it expected that it would be harder to get regulatory approval for the deal even though Dollar General was willing to sell as many as 1,500 stores.

A combination of Family Dollar and Chesapeake, Virginia-based Dollar Tree Inc. will create the largest dollar store company in the nation, with more than 13,000 stores. Dollar Gen-

eral, based in Goodlettsville, Tennessee, has more than 11,000 stores.

Shares of all three companies rose Thursday. Family Dollar Stores Inc. added 89 cents, or 1.2 percent, to close at \$76.44. Dollar Tree Inc. rose \$2.44, or 3.6 percent, to close at \$70.25. Dollar General Corp. rose \$2.56, or 3.8 percent, to close at \$69.77. □



## Hating Good Government



**PAUL KRUGMAN**  
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It's now official: 2014 was the warmest year on record. You might expect this to be a politically important milestone. After all, climate change deniers have long used the blip of 1998 - an unusually hot year, mainly due to an upwelling of warm water in the Pacific - to claim that the planet has stopped warming. This claim involves a complete misunderstanding of how one goes about identifying underlying trends. (Hint: Don't cherry-pick your observations.) But now even that bogus argument has collapsed. So will the deniers now concede that climate change is real?

Of course not. Evidence doesn't matter for the "debate" over climate policy, where I put scare quotes around "debate" because, given the obvious irrelevance of logic and evidence, it's not really a debate in any normal sense. And this situation is by no means unique. Indeed, at this point it's hard to think of a major policy dispute where facts actually do matter; it's unshakable dogma, across the board. And the real question is why. Before I get into that, let me remind you of some other news that won't matter.

First, consider the Kansas experiment. Back in 2012 Sam Brownback, the state's right-wing governor, went all in on supply-side economics: He drastically cut taxes, assuring everyone that the resulting boom would make up for the initial loss in revenues. Unfortunately for his constituents, his experiment has been a resounding failure. The economy of Kansas, far from booming, has lagged the economies of neighboring states, and Kansas is now in fiscal crisis.

So will we see conservatives scaling back their claims about the magical efficacy of tax cuts as a form of economic stimulus? Of course not. If evidence mattered, supply-side economics would have faded into obscurity decades ago. Instead, it has only strengthened its grip on the Republican Party. Meanwhile, the news on health reform keeps coming in, and it keeps being more favorable than even the supporters expected. We already knew that the number of Americans without insurance is dropping fast, even as the growth in health care costs moderates. Now we have evidence that the number of Americans experiencing

financial distress due to medical expenses is also dropping fast.

All this is utterly at odds with dire predictions that reform would lead to declining coverage and soaring costs. So will we see any of the people claiming that Obamacare is doomed to utter failure revising their position? You know the answer.

And the list goes on. On issues that range from monetary policy to the control of infectious disease, a big chunk of America's body politic holds views that are completely at odds with, and completely unmovable by, actual experience. And no matter the issue, it's the same chunk. If you've gotten involved in any of these debates, you know that these people aren't happy warriors; they're red-faced angry, with special rage directed at know-it-alls who snottily point out that the facts don't support their position.

The question, as I said at the beginning, is why. Why the dogmatism? Why the rage? And why do these issues go together, with the set of people insisting that climate change is a hoax pretty much the same as the set of people insisting that any attempt at providing universal health insurance must lead to disaster and tyranny? Well, it strikes me that the immovable position in each of these cases is bound up with rejecting any role for government that serves the public interest. If you don't want the government to impose controls or fees on polluters, you want to deny that there is any reason to limit emissions. If you don't want the combination of regulation, mandates and subsidies that is needed to extend coverage to the uninsured, you want to deny that expanding coverage is even possible. And claims about the magical powers of tax cuts are often little more than a mask for the real agenda of crippling government by starving it of revenue. And why this hatred of government in the public interest? Well, the political scientist Corey Robin argues that most self-proclaimed conservatives are actually reactionaries. That is, they're defenders of traditional hierarchy - the kind of hierarchy that is threatened by any expansion of government, even (or perhaps especially) when that expansion makes the lives of ordinary citizens better and more secure. I'm partial to that story, partly because it helps explain why climate science and health economics inspire so much rage.

Whether this is the right explanation or not, the fact is that we're living in a political era in which facts don't matter. This doesn't mean that those of us who care about evidence should stop seeking it out. But we should be realistic in our expectations, and not expect even the most decisive evidence to make much difference. □



## How Expensive It Is to Be Poor



**CHARLES M. BLOW**  
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This month, the Pew Research Center released a study that found that most wealthy Americans believed "poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return."

This is an infuriatingly obtuse view of what it means to be poor in this country - the soul-rending omnipresence of worry and fear, of weariness and fatigue. This can be the view only of those who have not known - or have long forgotten - what poverty truly means.

"Easy" is a word not easily spoken among the poor. Things are hard - the times are hard, the work is hard, the way is hard. "Easy" is for uninformed explanations issued by the willfully callous and the haughtily blind.

Allow me to explain, as James Baldwin put it, a few illustrations of "how extremely expensive it is to be poor."

First, many poor people work, but they just don't make enough to move out of poverty - an estimated 11 million Americans fall into this category.

So, as the Pew report pointed out, "more than half of the least secure group reports receiving at least one type of means-tested government benefit."

And yet, whatever the poor earn is likely to be more heavily taxed than the earnings of wealthier citizens, according to

a new analysis by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. As The New York Times put it last week:

"According to the study, in 2015 the poorest fifth of Americans will pay on average 10.9 percent of their income in state and local taxes, the middle fifth will pay 9.4 percent and the top 1 percent will average 5.4 percent."

In addition, many low-income people are "unbanked" (not served by a financial institution), and thus nearly eaten alive by exorbitant fees. As the St. Louis Federal Reserve pointed out in 2010:

"Unbanked consumers spend approximately 2.5 to 3 percent of a government benefits check and between 4 percent and 5 percent of payroll check just to cash them. Additional dollars are spent to purchase money orders to pay routine monthly expenses. When you consider the cost for cashing a bi-weekly payroll check and buying about six money orders each month, a household with a net income of \$20,000 may pay as much as \$1,200 annually for alternative service fees - substantially more than the expense of a monthly checking account."

Even when low-income people can become affiliated with a bank, those banks are increasing making them pay "steep rates for loans and high fees on basic checking accounts," as The Times' DealBook blog put it last year.

And poor people can have a hard time getting credit. As The Washington Post put it, the excesses of the subprime boom have led conventional banks to stay away from the riskiest borrowers, leaving them "all but cut off from access to big loans, like mortgages."

One way to move up the ladder and out of poverty is through higher education, but even that is not without disproportionate costs. As the Institute for College Access and Success noted in March:

"Graduates who received Pell

Grants, most of whom had family incomes under \$40,000, were much more likely to borrow and to borrow more. Among graduating seniors who ever received a Pell Grant, 88 percent had student loans in 2012, with an average of \$31,200 per borrower. In contrast, 53 percent of those who never received a Pell Grant had debt, with an average of \$26,450 per borrower."

And often, work or school requires transportation, which can be another outrageous expense. According to the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights:

"Low- and moderate-income households spend 42 percent of their total annual income on transportation, including those who live in rural areas, as compared to middle-income households, who spend less than 22 percent of their annual income on transportation."

And besides, having a car can make prime targets of the poor. One pernicious practice that the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri - and the protests that followed - resurfaced was the degree to which some local municipalities profit from police departments targeting poor communities, with a raft of stops, fines, summonses and arrests supported by police actions and complicit courts.

As NPR reported in August:

"In 2013, the municipal court in Ferguson - a city of 21,135 people - issued 32,975 arrest warrants for nonviolent offenses, mostly driving violations."

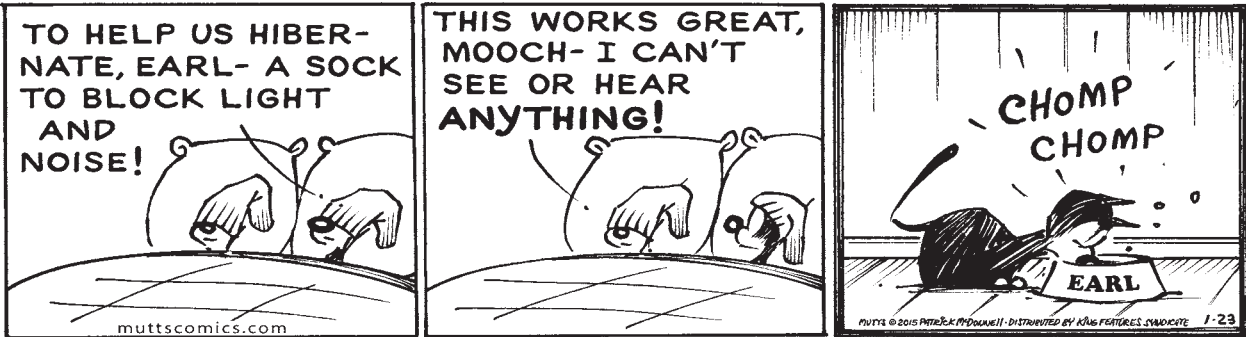
The story continued:

"ArchCity Defenders, a St. Louis-area public defender group, says in its report that more than half the courts in St. Louis County engage in the 'illegal and harmful practices' of charging high court fines and fees on nonviolent offenses like traffic violations - and then arresting people when they don't pay."

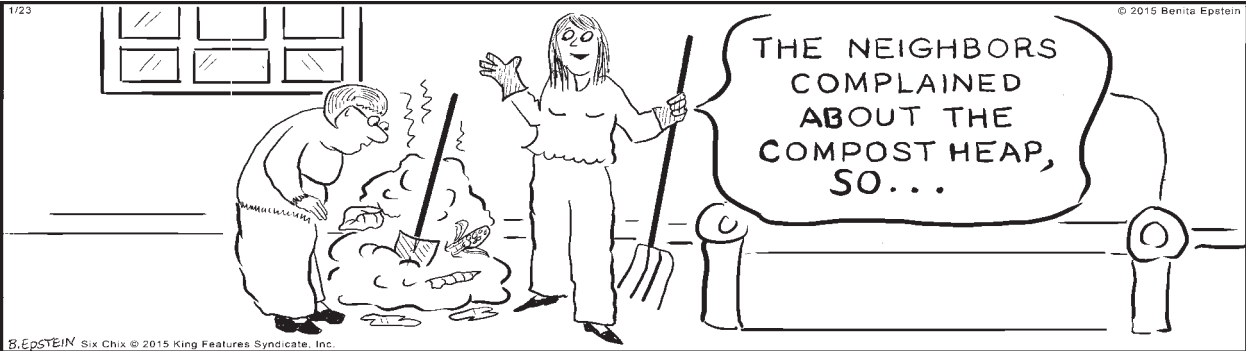
The list of hardships could go on for several more columns, but you get the point: Being poor is anything but easy. □



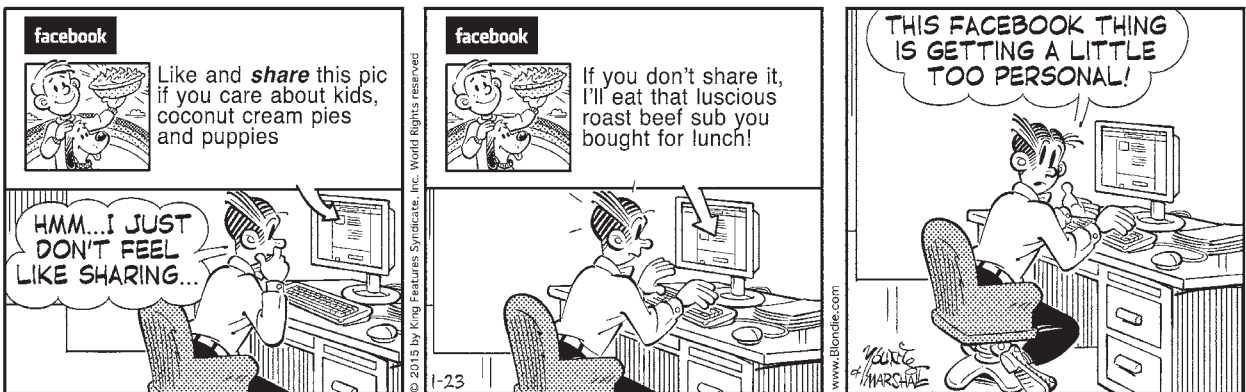
Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

		1	7		6	9		
	3	2				6	8	
7			5		2			4
				6				
3			8		9			2
	9	7				1	2	
		4	6		3	8		

Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 1/23

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

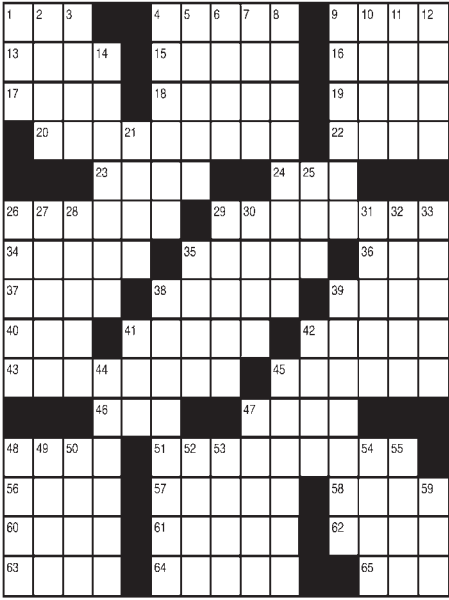
9	8	2	1	4	3	6	5	7
3	5	1	7	6	9	8	4	2
4	7	6	2	8	5	1	9	3
8	1	4	9	7	2	5	3	6
7	6	3	8	5	4	2	1	9
2	9	5	6	3	1	7	8	4
6	3	8	4	1	7	9	2	5
5	2	7	3	9	8	4	6	1
1	4	9	5	2	6	3	7	8

ACROSS

- 1 Weep  
4 Opening in a forest  
9 Verb on an Ovaltine label  
13 Spelling \_\_\_\_; school contests  
15 Refuse to obey  
16 Smidgen  
17 Didn't float  
18 Make laugh  
19 Stumble  
20 Like Hannibal Lecter  
22 Copper coin  
23 Money given to a borrower  
24 Afternoon hour  
26 Like a swirl of buzzing bees  
29 Of primary importance  
34 Make points  
35 Routine action  
36 Singing couple  
37 Crackpot  
38 Copycat  
39 Count calories  
40 At the \_\_\_\_ of the day; ultimately  
41 Green gems  
42 In poor taste  
43 Merited  
45 Facing a terrible fate  
46 Make \_\_\_\_ of; employ  
47 \_\_\_\_ into; meet by chance  
48 Drain blockage  
51 Mississippi steamer, e.g.  
56 Talk wildly  
57 Furious  
58 Orem's state  
60 Kill  
61 Expenses  
62 Heavy book  
63 Give a hoot  
64 Leg joints  
65 Paper Mate or Bic product

DOWN

- 1 TV network  
2 Gather crops  
3 Strong urges



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 1/23/15

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

GLUM	UPPER	STAB
ROSE	LEONE	URGE
OVEN	TOXIC	REEL
WESTERN	GABFEST	
	ONA	AMPLE
AWARD	GPA	URBAN
MANS	HIP	INSIDE
ODD	PAGEANT	DOS
NERVES	ASK	DEBT
GREAT	SRS	TUNES
	LACES	MOB
SIMILAR	BEWITCH	
ONES	BEARS	OAHU
SANE	INCAS	UPON
ONUS	NEEDY	SEPT

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- 44 Playwright \_\_\_\_  
45 Done under \_\_\_\_; not carried out willingly  
47 "The Divine Miss M"  
48 Gator's cousin  
49 Mount St.
- Helens' output  
50 Take \_\_\_\_; assume control  
52 Press clothing  
53 Bouquet holder  
54 Perched upon  
55 Not wild  
59 As mad as a wet \_\_\_\_



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## Atomic Scientists: We're getting even closer to doomsday

**SETH BORENSTEIN**  
AP Science Writer  
WASHINGTON (AP) —

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists says Earth is now closer to human-caused dooms-

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**Kennette Benedict, executive director, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, stands beside the old Doomsday Clock which showed five minutes until midnight during a news conference to announce the new clock reads three minutes until midnight, Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015, in Washington.**  
**Associated Press**

day than it has been in more than 30 years because of global warming and nuclear weaponry. But other experts say that's much too gloomy. The U.S. advocacy group founded by the creators of the atomic bomb moved their famed "Doomsday Clock" ahead two minutes on Thursday. It said the world is now three minutes from a catastrophic midnight, instead of five minutes.

"This is about doomsday; this is about the end of civilization as we know it," bulletin executive director Kennette Benedict said at a news conference in Washington. She called both climate change and modernization of nuclear weaponry equal but undeniable threats to humanity's continued existence that triggered the 20 scientists on the board to decide to move the clock closer to midnight. "The probability of global catastrophe is very high, and the actions needed to reduce the risks of disaster must be taken very soon," Benedict said. But other scientists aren't

quite so pessimistic.

Michael Oppenheimer, a professor of both geosciences and international affairs at Princeton University, said in an email: "I suspect that humans will 'muddle through' the climate situation much as we have muddled through the nuclear weapons situation — limiting the risk with cooperative international action and parallel domestic policies." The bulletin has included climate change in its doomsday clock since 2007. "The fact that the Doomsday clock-setters changed their definition of 'doomsday' shows how profoundly the world has changed — they have to find a new source of doom because global thermonuclear war is now so unlikely," Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker wrote in an email. Pinker in his book "The Better Angels of our Nature" uses statistics to argue that the world has become less war-like, less violent and more tolerant in recent decades and centuries. Richard Somerville, a member of the Bulletin's board

who is a climate scientist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, said the trend in heat-trapping emissions from the burning of fossil fuels will "lead to major climatic disruption globally. The urgency has nothing to do with politics or ideology. It arises from the laws of physics and biology and chemistry. These laws are non-negotiable."

But Somerville agreed that the threat from climate change isn't quite as all-or-nothing as it is with nuclear war.

Even with the end of the cold war, the lack of progress in the dismantling of nuclear weapons and countries like the United States and Russia spending hundreds of billions of dollars on modernizing nuclear weaponry makes an atomic bomb explosion — either accidental or on purpose — a continuing and more urgent threat, Benedict said. But Benedict did acknowledge the group has been warning of imminent nuclear disaster with its clock since 1947 and it hasn't happened yet. □



# Robert Redford kicks off Sundance Film Fest

SANDY COHEN

AP Entertainment Writer

PARK CITY, Utah (AP) —

Robert Redford kicks off the Sundance Film Festival he founded 31 years ago on Thursday afternoon at the event's original home, the 280-seat Egyptian Theatre. A lot has changed since those humble beginnings — the event now takes over Park City and has stretched into Salt Lake City — but Redford says change is what keeps the festival relevant. Though it has long outgrown its original venue, Sundance remains true to its mission of showcasing the work of emerging artists and experimental approaches that exist outside the Hollywood mainstream.

"The festival was meant to use change to underline the word diversity, and diversity is something I think moves the ball, and that's something I think we represent," Redford said at the festival's opening-day news conference. "That comes out of change. As things change, the filmmakers here roll with it, and their films show how change is affecting the life we live and the society that we're in."

Though he always blasts the "ambush marketers" who take over the town's Main Street with gift suites, sponsored showrooms and



Sundance Institute founder Robert Redford addresses the media during the opening day press conference at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015, in Park City, Utah.

Associated Press

celebrity hangouts, Redford said he's gratified by the festival's continued growth.

"When it started to happen, I wasn't prepared for it," he said. "It grew way beyond my imagination." More than 12,000 submissions from around the globe were culled to the 118 feature-length documentary and narrative films featured during the 10-day event this year.

"We're really seeing a lift in the quality (of independent film)," said festival director John Cooper. "I think the wild ride of the

festival is going to be felt by the audiences."

Redford himself is featured in a film premiering Friday, "A Walk in the Woods."

"That was not my idea," he said, adding that he has not been involved in film selection for the festival since its inception, for fear of appearing self-promotional.

"And I also said at that time, just to make sure, I don't ever think that anything I do should be in the festival. I think that would be self-interested and I don't want

to do that," Redford said. "So we all agreed on it, until recently. John went out of bounds."

Other highlights at the festival include Redford's appearance alongside George Lucas at a Power of Story panel set to stream live on the Sundance website, and James Franco, in his first appearances since "The Interview"-Sony hack scandal, has three films in Park City — two at Sundance and one at the concurrent, even-more-indie

festival, Slamdance. Funny folks Jack Black and Sarah Silverman take dramatic turns in feature films, Bobcat Goldthwait premieres a documentary about comic Barry Crimmins, and comedian Tig Notaro stars in her own documentary, "Tig." Other starry offerings include: "Z for Zachariah," in which Margot Robbie believes she's the last woman on Earth, until she discovers Chris Pine and Chiwetel Ejiofor; "Sleeping With Other People," starring Jason Sudeikis and Alison Brie; the gambling drama "Mississippi Grind," starring Ryan Reynolds, Alison Brie and Alfre Woodard; "Lila & Eve" with Jennifer Lopez and Viola Davis; "Slow West" with Michael Fassbender; and the closing-night film, "Grandma," starring Lily Tomlin.

The Sundance Film Festival continues through Feb. 1.



## Kiss-and-tell and so much more in store on WEtv's 'Sex Box'

NEW YORK (AP) — A new reality show on WEtv boasts that its couples will make love on the air. But viewers won't get to see it.

"Sex Box" premieres for an 11-episode run on Feb. 27, the network announced Thursday.

The provocatively titled series will feature couples discussing their relationship issues with a panel of experts. But all that yacking will bookend the main event: a bona fide sex session for each couple in a camera-free, soundproof box on the show's set.

The post-coitus portion of the show will allow the partners to share any problems with so-called "sexperts." Then advice will flow.

It all happens in front of a studio audience.

WEtv says "Sex Box" might "just be the start of the next sexual revolution in the United States."

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# Aniston talks Oscar snub, Razzie nom and acting cred

**MIKE CIDONI LENNOX**

**AP Entertainment Reporter  
LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Yes,

Jennifer Aniston would like to thank the academy. But it won't be this year.

At long last, many critics saw Aniston fulfill potential first revealed in 2002's art-house hit "The Good Girl" in an even darker, more daring role in the drama "Cake," in which she plays a drug-addicted woman in chronic physical and emotional pain.

That performance earned the "Friends" star Golden Globe and Critics' Choice nominations, and this weekend, Aniston's performance also is up for a Screen Actors Guild award. But the motion picture academy passed her by when it announced its nominations last week.

On the day after failing to receive the Oscar nomination, the 45-year-old Aniston was promoting "Cake," which opens Friday, while sitting just inches away from a poster touting her "Oscar-worthy performance."

"Well, there's 'Oscar-worthy,'" the actress said, with



**Jennifer Aniston arrives at the 72nd annual Golden Globe Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on Sunday, Jan. 11, 2015, in Beverly Hills, Calif.**

**Associated Press**

a grin. "The truth is, this movie hasn't even come out yet," she continued. "I feel so lucky that any of that has even happened on a movie that we started shooting not even a year ago. We started April 3rd of last year. I couldn't ask for more than that."

But she has gotten at least

a little bit more: The Golden Raspberry Foundation, best known for its loving slams of bad cinema with The Razzies, revealed a softer side last week when it announced a new category, the Razzie Redeemer Award, honoring former Razzie regulars who now are doing work worth ap-

plauding.

Aniston is a Redeemer Award nominee, thanks to her work in "Cake."

"That's so nice," she said, sincerely. "You get a Nice Razzie."

While never a winner, Aniston is a four-time Razzie nominee, primarily for roles in her string of generally

poorly reviewed, but often commercially successful, romantic comedies.

Given how the rom-coms overwhelm her filmography, Aniston said she wasn't surprised when "Cake" director Daniel Barnz asked her to read for the emotionally complex role of Claire Simmons.

"You start to lose trust in yourself that you can do something such as that," Aniston explained. "So you actually start to say, 'Does the industry actually know something that I don't know? Can I do this?'"

Aniston gets to give at least one acceptance speech for her performance in "Cake." Just a week after Sunday's SAG Awards, the actress will head some 90 miles north of Hollywood to accept the Santa Barbara International Film Festival's Montecito Award.

"It's been 25 years that I've been lucky enough to make a living doing what I love to do," Aniston said. "So, to keep having surprises and to keep surprising myself is so exciting. And I just want to do more of that." □

# CNN's Cooper says he was mistaken on Muslim zones

**DAVID BAUDER**

**AP Television Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — CNN has joined Fox News Channel in saying that it was mistaken to report in the wake of an attack on the French newspaper Charlie Hebdo that there were neighborhoods in Europe considered "no go" zones for non-Muslims. Fox apologized over the weekend for on-air comments made by pundits, including one who described the English city of Birmingham as "totally Muslim." In an interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo threatened to sue Fox over comments made about her city.

On Monday, CNN's Anderson Cooper aired a story on his program about what Fox had said.

But The Washington Post subsequently pointed out the supposed "no go"



**In this Jan. 10, 2014 file photo, Anderson Cooper of CNN poses at the CNN Worldwide All-Star Party in Pasadena, Calif.**

**Associated Press**

zones were talked about on CNN the previous week — including on Cooper's program. Cooper even used one analyst's comments about Muslim-dominated areas as the basis for a question he put to an-

other guest.

"If you are going to point fingers at other people's mistakes, you should also acknowledge your own mistakes and we didn't do that on the program," Cooper said on the air Wednes-

day night.

Cooper noted that he did not challenge his guests.

"I should have been more skeptical," he said. "Won't make the same mistake again."

CNN representatives did

not have an immediate comment on whether other CNN shows would address the issue. The network went back and checked its transcripts when attention was called to its own lapses. □

# Clive Davis to be honored with Hasty Pudding award

**CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts (AP)** — Music producer and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame member Clive Davis

is this year's winner of the highest honor awarded by Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Institute of 1770.

Davis will receive the Order of the Golden Sphinx award at a gala in New York City on April 13. The institute announced the award Wednesday.

Davis says in a statement that he's thrilled to be re-

ceiving the award, which recognizes extraordinary contributions to the performing arts.

A five-time Grammy winner, Davis has worked with a wide range of artists, from Janis Joplin and Billy Joel to Whitney Houston and Alicia Keys.

The institute includes the Hasty Pudding Theatricals, which has chosen Chris Pratt as its 2015 Man of the Year and Amy Poehler as its Woman of the Year. □









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